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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 30 June 1997, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. GALUSKA (Czech Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION:

(a) COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES ON A SYSTEM-WIDE BASIS: FUNDING FOR OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT: IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/227 (agenda item 3 (a)) (continued) (A/52/155-E/1997/68, E/1997/78)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to continue its informal dialogue with the heads of United Nations funds and programmes.

Mr. MEYER (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, asked what measures were contemplated to widen the basis of the recruitment of dissident coordinators and to guarantee their independence, particularly in relation to their organizations of origin. He also requested further information about the content of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and its complementarity with existing documents, such as Country Strategy Notes (CSN) and the existing country notes of the World Bank. It would also be interesting to know the views of the panel on the prospects of improving contacts with the specialized agencies.

General Assembly resolution 50/227 requested the executive boards to make their own arrangements for financing programmes, and he would like to know the thinking of the secretariats on those matters. He wondered whether the possibility of following the example of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in mobilizing financial support from the private sector was being considered by other agencies.

Ms. LETROT (France) said that she noted from paragraph 33 of the report on field coordination (E/1997/65/Add.2) that several resident representatives of the United Nations system had indicated that they were not sufficiently motivated to devote the necessary time to supporting resident coordinator system functions, and would like to know what was being done to remedy that situation. She agreed with the representative of Luxembourg that it was highly desirable to separate the functions of resident coordinators in the field from their functions as local heads of funds or programmes. During discussions on the internal reform of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), it had emerged that the objectives assigned to UNDP personnel, particularly with regard to resource mobilization, did not necessarily correspond to the needs of the system as a whole.

She wished to ask the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) what had been the advantages and disadvantages of the change of status of programme directors to representatives. On the question of shared premises, she would like to know whether the specialized agencies had been associated with the rationalization exercise, and whether there were many identified cases of extra costs arising when, for example, premises previously free of charge were placed at the disposal of several agencies. She wondered whether the problems arising from the diversion of UNDP housing stock were retarding joint work on that matter.

She wished to ask the Under-Secretary-General in Charge of the Economic and Social Departments how he proposed to organize relations between his new department and the agencies responsible for field implementation.

Mr. MABILANGAN (Philippines) said that administrative reforms to the United Nations system must not be made at the expense of implementing development plans, and he wondered what provision there was for striking a balance between demand and supply in cases where a CSN embodied priorities differing from those of the DAF and whether a third document might possibly be required. He also asked in which document priority sectoral concerns would be identified. Like the representative of France, he wondered what progress had been made towards involving the specialized agencies at the country level, where further clarification of their mandates might possibly be required. While welcoming the strengthening of the role of the resident coordinators, he would be grateful for further information about coordinating mechanisms between them and the regional programmes.

Ms. BELLAMY (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that the role of the resident coordinators had been extensively discussed in the development operations group and it seemed to be the general view that there was need for some improvement, in such points as selection, responsiveness to the needs of the system as a whole, and problems arising out of the dual function of the coordinators. The whole question was one on which discussion was likely to continue for some time.

As far as the DAF was concerned, one of the great advantages was that, where a common country assessment could be arrived at, a common database could be built which different agencies could use in shaping their programmes, without compromising the identity and accountability of individual programmes.

As for cooperation with the specialized agencies, the funds and programmes were generally working more closely with them at the country level. If a common country assessment could be achieved, she hoped that the specialized agencies would choose to participate.

Ms. BERTINI (Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP)) said that the performance of resident coordinators, also acting as UNDP resident representatives, had previously been assessed exclusively in terms of the latter function. In future they would have objectives set as coordinators for the United Nations and have their performance appraised partly in terms of that function. The recruitment of resident coordinators would be best considered at the end of the working year when UNDP carried out its customary review of the posts required. The post of resident coordinator should be seen as a career opportunity for staff from a variety of agencies.

As for the example set by UNICEF in mobilizing funds from civil society, WFP had for the last couple of years been trying to gain new partners to help to promote anti-hunger issues. It was also talking to some business corporations about food or cash contributions and had made contact with educational circles in some countries, in the hope of encouraging more enlightened attitudes towards its work.

WFP shared premises in about half the countries in which it worked, and, where that was not so, it was for particular reasons, such as the availability of rent-free accommodation.

Ms. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that UNFPA had several mechanisms for cooperation with the specialized agencies, such as the guidelines issued for cooperation with WHO, and UNICEF, on reproductive health, and it also had agency support teams for cooperation with WHO, UNESCO, FAO and the regional economic commissions. There was also an inter-agency task force, and common guidelines had also been established in the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

Several new financing methods had been explored, for example by approving larger country programmes than UNFPA could itself manage, so that donors could buy into such programmes. The possibilities of private-sector funding were also being explored, as were contacts with new government donors.

UNFPA had carried out a survey on views on population, reproductive health and other relevant issues in various countries, which had publicized the findings. Field trips for parliamentarians to see what was being done by UNFPA had also been organized. The possibility of debt swapping was also being explored with a number of donors.

With regard to the resident coordinators, she said that their functions should be clearly defined and separated from those involved in representing any single organization. They should also set common goals to be pursued on behalf of the whole system, which was particularly important where fund-raising was concerned. UNFPA also derived many advantages on the use of its field officers, who had more time to promote particular sectoral activities than the coordinators.

In reply to the question by the representative of the Philippines, she said that she herself would like to see a more unified approach than was sometimes possible by using CSNs. The coordination of thematic working groups should emerge from country programmes, rather than the reverse. The coordination of regional programmes on a system-wide basis presented problems that were still very much live issues for the DAF. A common set of principles was required, and they could be derived from guidelines worked out by follow-up groups.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that he shared the view that the impartiality of the resident coordinators was of fundamental importance, and the UNDP Executive Committee had taken a number of decisions to ensure: that, at all times, they acted on behalf of and in the interests of the system as a whole; that they understood that, in all cases, the primary interests to be consulted were those of the system and not of UNDP or any other agency; and that adequate time was allotted to them to carry out their coordination duties.

A recent questionnaire had shown that, across all the regions, they spent, on average, about one third of their time on their resident coordinator functions but believed that they could usefully spend as much as half of their time on them. Arrangements were to be made to ensure that they were able to do so. As far as UNDP was concerned, if the figure began to exceed 50 per cent, a country director could be put in to assume the day-to-day management of the Programme.

As for performance appraisals, the resident coordinators would continue to report to the Secretary-General, but independent performance appraisals against standards agreed among all the agencies would be carried out. As long as resident coordinators continued to have two sets of responsibilities, some give and take had to be allowed for, but the alternative - a full-time resident coordinator - would weaken the system rather than strengthen it. Such a person would have no programme and no standing, and time would also be wasted because coordination responsibilities were not full-time activities.

UNDP was also establishing a sense of collective responsibility for the resident coordinator system through the Office of United Nations System Support Services (OUNS), into which secondments of staff had been made from UNFPA, WFP and UNICEF.

As for the specialized agencies, they had not yet been involved in any of the formal processes to which he had referred, although it might at some future time be possible to invite their participation.

On the point raised by the representative of France, he thought that there might be some misunderstanding. The main thrust of paragraphs 30-33 of document E/1997/65/Add.2 was that there was a need to create incentives for all funds and programmes to support the resident coordinator system. He agreed with the representative of Philippines that any reform made should enhance not reduce development effectiveness.

The proposal contained in the DAF was that the advisory notes from various funds and programmes should be consolidated, while ensuring that, wherever there was a CSN in place, the advisory note should be in response to it. There would never be a situation under the proposals for the DAF in which the identification of each programme was lost.

As far as regional cooperation was concerned, he believed that the regional economic commissions would be the most suitable focal points for coordination.

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General in Charge of the Economic and Social Departments), replying to the representative of France, said that dialogue between the Council and the various executive boards was being actively promoted to ensure better coordination between the Organization's normative and operational activities. To that end, heads of task forces had participated in the coordinated follow-up to major international conferences such as the World Summit for Social Development. Similarly, conference

secretariats had been fully involved in the operational side of funds and programmes within the framework of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC).

Although the outreach capacities of the various secretariats were modest in comparison with the scale of funds and programmes, their policy advisory services would prove useful in the first stage of the follow-up to normative activities, as at the sessions of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Biannual meetings at working level between the relevant secretariats had been proposed, with a view to promoting a better understanding of each side's role.

Mr. CALOVSKI (Observer for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that the Secretary-General's reports (E/1997/65 and Add.1-4) provided a clear definition of the Organization's operational problems, namely a decrease in resources, falling numbers of donor countries and an insufficient relevance of operational activities to a number of Member States including developing countries, least developed countries (LDCs), small island States and countries with economies in transition. Despite a welcome reduction in duplication of activities and an increase in resources from the private sector, the overall situation remained unsatisfactory.

The Council, in accordance with its obligations under the Charter, should make recommendations to the General Assembly concerning the future policy of United Nations programmes, and the measures to be adopted by Member States and the other parties concerned. The Secretary-General was to be commended for stressing country-level capacity-building in his reports.

The weakening role of Governments in international relations could have been foreseen in view of the globalization of the world economy and changing market forces. National Governments tended to be more preoccupied with internal affairs, whereas civil society and the private sector were participating more actively in international relations. Paradoxically, the improvement in the global economy had not brought about any increased funding for the United Nations.

The Council must adopt an "all-embracing" policy, since political will, humanitarian preoccupations and the urgency of eliminating poverty and halting

the spread of mass diseases were all of equal importance. With a view to ensuring that the Balkans met General Assembly requirements and became a stable zone of development by 2000, the priority there was to accelerate integration into the European Union.

In the politically problematic humanitarian assistance field, the focus should be on preventive action and post-conflict emergency relief. In the social field, elimination of poverty through development must be stressed; in the economic field, sustainable growth and development, full integration into the world economy, increased market access and country-level capacity-building. No nation should be marginalized or forgotten.

The United Nations agencies were faced with the onerous task of ensuring that they remained relevant to the economic and social development of specific countries and that the assistance provided was effective. The Council should not, however, be too pessimistic with regard to funding, since contributions from the private sector were likely to increase and new donors would emerge from among the developing countries.

The adoption of the Agenda on Development and the outcome of the Special Session of the General Assembly on Agenda 21 were both to be welcomed. The success of the United Nations agencies would, in future, be judged on their achievements at country level, and not at their headquarters. He would like to know what concrete measures were being implemented to increase resources for operational activities and what arrangements had been made with regional organizations, such as the European Union or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Ms. HAGA (Observer for Norway), having welcomed the focus on reform in the introductory speeches and expressed support for the substantive proposals made, said that the strengthening of the resident coordinator system and the common premises strategy all constituted steps in the right direction, and UNDP was to be commended on the leadership role it had assumed in that regard. While approving the general direction of Track One of the reform process and looking forward to its full implementation, she stressed that the golden opportunity for broader reform must not be missed. The Secretary-General should be encouraged to make his proposals for reform, which

were to be submitted to the Council at its current session, both courageous and comprehensive. The onus would then be on the Member States to support, modify or reject them.

A more integrated system at the country level was a prerequisite for attracting investment in and support for the United Nations development system, as was the Organization's willingness to work in a system-wide context. Piecemeal reform would no longer suffice; human and financial resources must be pooled to create a stronger system to serve as a more interesting partner for the developing countries and the Bretton Woods institutions. Turf battles between individual agencies must be proscribed since they could prove damaging to the entire United Nations system and to the reform process as a whole.

Mr. DLAMINI (Observer for Swaziland) said he wondered whether any comprehensive strategies actually existed for addressing situations at a regional or national level before they escalated. He cited, in particular, the human suffering in the Great Lakes region of Africa. What concrete measures were being implemented by UNICEF to alleviate the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo? How was WFP intending to address the food problems of southern Africa? Disputing assertions in the documentation that food production had improved in the subregion and that there had been a "bumper crop" in a certain part of Africa (E/1997/41, para. 6), he stressed that his country in particular had suffered from the consequences of drought. He wondered, therefore, what justification there was for relocating the WFP office away from the country.

Commending the efforts of the International Programme for the Development of Communications (IPDC), he said that even greater efforts must be made at grass-roots level to ensure that population development issues were handled in a culturally sensitive manner. To ensure continued relevance, full account should be taken of the dialogue that had taken place at the previous Council's session, especially with regard to a new development agenda for Africa. That would be preferable to embarking upon new themes.

Being concerned that Africa should not be marginalized, he said it was time that more Africans sat at the "high table". The senior levels of the

Secretariat did not currently reflect equitable geographical distribution. Africans, too, should be given the chance to influence the international community, for they were equally competent to do so.

Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile) said it was important to identify bottlenecks in the area of coordination. The statement by the representative of Norway reflected a general feeling on the part of Governments that programmes with common objectives established at major world conferences should coordinate their activities as much as possible.

Improved coordination of the resident coordinator system would require efforts by the various agencies, but also by Governments, which were accustomed to dealing with them on an individual basis.

The United Nations suffered from an image problem. Derogatory references to the Organization had become a general practice; some countries went so far as to use quite unacceptable language, while others had simply fallen into the habit of referring to the United Nations as an inefficient bureaucracy. It had also been said that the Security Council, of which Chile was currently a member, lacked the political will to resolve problems in countries such as Rwanda and Somalia. There seemed, in fact, to be an international obsession with the work of the Security Council, often to the detriment of other components of the United Nations system. Some agencies, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) were very much in the public eye. He wondered how the Member States could collectively assist other United Nations agencies to project a more accurate image of the Organization's work.

At its current session, the Council would, for the first time, discuss the question of coordinated follow-up to the major international conferences and summits. United Nations agencies and the Governments of the Member States must work together to ensure implementation of the commitments made on those occasions.

Conflict prevention was too often neglected, and problems were ignored until they resulted in emergencies. In other cases, after a political agreement had been signed between the parties to a conflict, the Security Council merely issued a final resolution calling on the international community to cooperate in the reconstruction and development of the country in

question, which then disappeared from the public eye. The Council had a role to play in such situations, as authorized under Article 65 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. RUNGE (Germany) asked whether the UNDAF was to be considered as a new procedure or a strengthening of existing coordination procedures, such as the CSN, which had already been established by various executive boards.

Mr. AKRAM (Observer for Pakistan), speaking with regard to the reform of the economic and social segments of the United Nations system, said he wondered whether the coordination between the various agencies which the idea of a single executive board was designed to enhance was feasible without direct supervision from the Secretary-General. In the past, that function had been entrusted to the Office of the Director General for Development and International Economic Cooperation thus preventing any single operational agency from playing a supervisory role. Consideration should, perhaps, be given to re-establishing that Office in the interests of inter-agency cooperation.

When the governing councils of the various bodies had been replaced by executive boards, it had been understood that the change would lead to increased donor support, but that had not been the case. The currently-proposed reforms were also accompanied by promises of increased funding, which were equally unlikely to be fulfilled. It was time to seek reform, where necessary, in the interests of greater efficiency rather than that of increased donor support.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), speaking in reply to the observer for The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, said that he had not suggested that the regional economic commissions should take over, or even be the principal executors of, regional programmes, but rather that a regional administrative committee on coordination should be established to improve coordination at the regional rather than the country level.

In reply to the question by the representative of France, he said that misallocation of the Reserve for Field Accommodation had not been a factor in slowing down the move towards common premises.

He agreed that the Council had an important role to play in dealing with countries in special development circumstances before, during and after crises; however, such a role would require the establishment of new structures within the Council and, in particular, of smaller committees which could meet more regularly to discuss critical issues.

In reply to the representative of Chile's question concerning bottlenecks in coordination, he pointed out that the United Nations had many successes of which to be proud and that existing problems were being, or would soon be, addressed. Resident coordinators' responsibilities sometimes exceeded their leverage at the country level, and their influence was sometimes overly dependent on personal relationships at the local level. Some of them did not spend enough time in meeting their responsibilities or lacked the necessary skills or humanitarian experience, while others had failed to recognize the need for a team approach under their leadership.

There had been conflicting signals from Headquarters and from other United Nations agencies concerning the responsibilities of the resident coordinators, and conflicts might have arisen between their two roles of resident coordinator and UNDP resident representative. There was no clear job description for the post. There was a need for further recruitment of resident coordinators from other agencies, for a performance measurement system and for additional financial and human support for the resident coordinator programme.

There had been only slow progress in the harmonization of procedures, formats and financial management systems. Governments did not always support the system or made conflicting demands on it. Training opportunities existed, but had not been made available to all resident coordinators. However, all of those problems were being addressed.

The best way for the United Nations to improve its image was to develop strong cooperative programmes at the country level and to communicate the success of those programmes to the public. He emphasized the importance of integrated diversity at both the country and Headquarters levels and the importance of the agencies' ability to act either in cooperation or independently, as required. It should be remembered that the sum total of all

United Nations development assistance was less than that provided by bilateral donors, and preference should be given to country-driven strategies and, in particular, to those contained in the CSNs.

With regard to the question by the representative of Germany, he said that UNDAF was not a new procedure but a way of bringing existing mechanisms together. It had not yet been possible to move from information sharing to country-driven strategies, and the purpose of UNDAF was to provide a framework for discussion of ways of meeting the needs of individual countries. To that end, he hoped that more CSNs would be produced.

With regard to the question by the observer for Pakistan concerning the former Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Coordination, he hoped that all Member States would support the Secretary-General's approach to reform. He agreed that there had been an unfortunate pattern of increasing reforms leading to decreased, rather than increased, donor support which, if it continued, would put an end to the Organization's credibility and to the reform process as a whole.

Ms. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)), replying to the question by the observer for The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, said that UNFPA had received a $35 million four-year grant from the European Union for a programme in Asia and was working on a similar programme for North Africa. There were plans for a meeting in Europe concerning countries with economies in transition.

With regard to the comment by the observer for Norway, she said she agreed with the observer for Pakistan that the reform of the governing councils had not always led to increased resources; although, her own agency had, indeed, received increased funding. She also agreed that there must be a system-wide approach to reform; however, Governments must commit themselves to supporting those reforms, which were too often thwarted because the agencies scheduled for reorganization included some nationals of certain countries. Furthermore, the reform process had given insufficient consideration to programmes with a demonstrated track record, which should be protected from imposed change.

With regard to the statement by the observer for Swaziland, she said that UNFPA endeavoured to take national and cultural concerns into consideration and had set up a new programme on culture, norms and mores, with particular emphasis on Africa.

In reply to the representative of Chile's question on bottlenecks in coordination, she said it was true that the dual responsibilities of the resident coordinator system had led to various conflicts and that Governments preferred to work with individual agencies. Some Governments had weak coordination mechanisms, which in turn weakened the United Nations system, while other Governments were strong and saw a strong United Nations coordination system as a threat.

The role of resident coordinator must be separated from the representation of any one organization at the institutional level. Resident coordinators were justified in fearing that a lack of funding would lead to their marginalization, and Member States must allow the resident coordinators to be the final arbitrators before any programme was negotiated with a Government. In that regard, it was important that a common database and statistics should be used as a basis for all such programmes.

In reply to the observer for Pakistan, she said that the role of the former Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Coordination should be re-examined to see why it had not worked well. The original idea had been to separate the functions involved and to give the supervisory role to an objective, impartial individual. However, there was a need for a better and more objective selection process, an accurate job description and performance evaluations.

It was unfortunate that the image of the United Nations was dominated by political considerations and that the public as a whole did not understand the purpose of assistance programmes and the activities of the various agencies. Follow-up to world conferences was a good way of achieving a common agenda.

In reply to the representative of Germany's question, she said that the advantage of the UNDAF, which was a refined rather than a new procedure, was its potential for providing a common system for situational analysis based on the guidelines established at major conferences and leading to a common development framework.

Ms. BERTINI (Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP)) said that WFP had phased out its activities in certain countries in order to direct its decreased resources towards the areas of greatest need. The Executive Board had defined general criteria but had left it up to the Secretariat to decide on specific action. By the end of 1997, WFP would have phased out its programmes in 20 countries, most of which were no longer least developed or food deficit countries and therefore no longer qualified for multilateral food aid.

The Executive Board had mandated that over 50 per cent of the agency's resources must be allocated to least developed countries (LDCs) and over 90 per cent to low-income food deficit countries. Some WFP activities had been phased out because Governments had not cooperated with existing programmes or because those programmes were so small that their overhead costs were as great as the cost of food delivery. She assured the observer for Swaziland, however, that WFP was still capable of handling emergencies, even in countries where it did not have development programmes.

With regard to the questions concerning WFP donors, she explained that, while WFP relied heavily on a small number of major donors, there were also many small donors, including four developing countries which contributed over US$ 1 million a year and about a dozen countries or entities which had recently either become new donors or vastly increased their contributions. In reply to the question by the observer for Pakistan, she said she was convinced that the best way of encouraging donors to increase their contributions was to improve the cost-effectiveness of programmes, not only through reform of the Organization but also through good management practice.

Furthermore, WFP must be proactive in communicating the needs of the poor in order to encourage support for its programmes. As the representative of Chile had pointed out, the media tended to cover only emergencies rather than long-term projects which enabled the poor to help themselves. Emergency funding received more attention than development funding, and public awareness of the latter must be increased.

Track One of the reform process was proceeding apace, but much remained to be done. She looked forward to having future proposals by the Secretary-General and to Council decisions on further reform of the United Nations.

It had been suggested that the Secretary-General should have greater responsibilities for United Nations agencies. In fact, she thought there was a need for overall accountability and the Secretary-General should, perhaps, be in charge of all United Nations agencies; the general public did not realize that that was not the case.

Problems arose at the level of communication between agencies and Government representatives, and even between the ministries and representatives of a single Government which might be involved in the work of various agencies. Another restriction on coordination was the fact that resource allocation was increasingly dictated by outside sources. However, experience had resulted in the recognition of problems; there were many countries where the resident coordinator programmes had functioned well, and she expected further improvement in the long term.

Ms. BELLAMY (Executive Director, United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)), speaking with regard to bottlenecks in coordination, said there was a need to make agencies less personality-driven. Member States had pressed for increased coordination, but there were cases in which Governments had been able to make positive use of the different elements of the United Nations system. Another problem was the lack of coordination among donor Governments.

It was true that the media found United Nations development work less interesting than the Organization's problems and failures. Clarity in describing the goals and achievements of the United Nations would help to improve its image. UNICEF was working increasingly with civil society, as well as with Governments and other United Nations agencies.

In reply to the comments by the observer for Swaziland, she pointed out that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had provided basic health and education assistance with a focus on family reunification and unaccompanied children.

She drew attention to the 1996 UNICEF State of the World's Children Report, which had focused on children and war, and to Ms. Gracia Machel's more recent report to the General Assembly on the impact of armed conflict on children (A/51/306 and Add.1). It was important to focus not only on the country level, but also on that of the global community, in order to reduce the occurrence of such conflicts.

In reply to the representative of Germany, she said that the UNDAF was an attempt to build on past experience and to gain an overall picture of existing resources and relationships between programmes. She was encouraged by the introduction of the UNDAF and by the changes in the resident coordinator programme under Track One of the reform process; the ultimate goal must, however, be improved assistance to countries rather than reform for the sake of reform, and results rather than appearances must be the measure of success. Donors wanted their resources to be efficiently used and, in a climate of decreased government funding, UNICEF was currently receiving one third of its resources from the private sector. That was because it had been able to demonstrate its success in improving the conditions of children in the countries where its programmes were implemented.

Ms. DURRANT (Jamaica) asked how UNFPA in particular would assess its record in regard to capacity building for national execution.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) said that his own country's experience was that the various agencies which had operated in Bangladesh over the years had performed well in their respective areas and had contributed significantly to improving the lives of the people. That experience should be borne in mind in the context of so-called consolidation.

Noting that a number of United Nations conferences had been held and resolutions adopted on the problems of the least developed countries (LDCs), he asked how far they had succeeded in coordinating and focusing attention on those problems at both the field and Headquarters levels. He would also like to know to what extent the various agencies cooperated with the regional economic commissions. Lastly, it would be useful if the Council and the General Assembly could be more fully informed regarding the work of the ACC.

Mr. MARCH (Australia) said that the quality of the resident coordinator system was the greatest challenge facing the United Nations in the field. Reform under both Track One and Track Two was vital and he fully supported the comments of the representative of Norway in that regard.

On the question of resources, he supported the comments of the representative of Chile regarding the image of the United Nations. Funds should be sought in order to do a few things well, which could then be used as

leverage, rather than setting larger and less tangible objectives. Donor countries were looking for tangible outcomes and for evidence of successful resource utilization.

Mr. PEDERSEN (Observer for Denmark) said that the Secretary-General's decision on Track One was the most important step of recent years. The conclusion whether or not the United Nations was relevant as a development organization would inevitably be based on an evaluation of its activities at the country level. The four elements which would determine whether the United Nations could exert a positive influence were the resident coordinator system, the UNDAF, the establishment of common premises and services and, last but not least, the availability of well-qualified professional staff.

It was generally agreed that the resident coordinator system must be strengthened and much had been done already in that regard. The point at issue was whether the resident coordinator should be linked to the operational system. His own delegation believed that, without such a link, the so-called "two hat" model, the resident coordinator would have no credibility. It was hard to see why that should constitute a major problem.

As far as programming within the UNDAF was concerned, he suggested that experience in India, as recently reported, constituted a desirable model. As for the common premises and services, his delegation supported the cost-effective initiatives already taken by the Secretary-General. The problems that had arisen in certain cases should not be allowed to hold back the whole exercise.

With regard to staff, his delegation supported the steps already taken. One element of the highly important process of staff-performance appraisal should be the staff member's contribution to coordination, which should be regarded as the responsibility of the entire country team.

While some progress had already been made in the implementation of Track One, there had been too much argument as to why it should not take place rather than on how it should be implemented. Track One reform was, however, a first prerequisite for making the United Nations system more relevant. One of the earliest consequences of failure in that regard might well be reduced

contributions to some or all of the agencies concerned. He looked forward to the implementation of the Secretary-General's Track Two reforms at the country level.

Mr. LOZANO (Mexico) asked whether there had been any effort to harmonize the measures taken to ensure coordination in the field with those at the Headquarters level. He also asked what were the chief lessons to be learned from the experience of coordination in the field.

Mr. KONISHI (Japan) asked whether, in view of the importance of the functions of the resident coordinators, any consideration had been given to the possibility of involving Member States in their appointment. As far as the performance of the resident coordinator's duties was concerned, it was advisable, given the importance of an integrated approach to development, that he should have a point of contact with Member States, for example, in respect of the presentation of a CSN. There should be full consultation during the formulation of the CSN, not only with the Government concerned but also with donor the countries and the Bretton Woods institutions.

Mr. SIMKHADA (Observer for Nepal) said that the essence of any reform package was its ultimate impact and not its structure. He asked the administrator of UNDP in particular how the current restructuring process would help to strengthen the participatory approach to development rather than the traditional top-down model that intergovernmental organizations seemed to adopt at the country level.

The programme of national offices referred to by the Executive Director of WFP was interesting and he would welcome a broader picture of the way in which the process was developing. He would also like to know how the rights-based approach to the needs of children, and of society as a whole, in the developing world, referred to by the Executive Director of UNICEF, was working in actual practice.

Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) said that the successful implementation of Tracks One and Two of the reform process was absolutely crucial to the ability of the United Nations to move ahead. He agreed with the representative of Australia that it was vital to resolve the current debate about the resident coordinator system. Many issues were involved, demanding careful consideration, but some agreement must be

achieved in order to make it work. The notion of trying to delink responsibility for the resident coordinator system from the operational part of development activities did not seem a useful one.

Mr. PEDROSO (Cuba) asked whether there had been any calculation of the amount of resources that could be reallocated as a result of the reform process. The representative of Norway had said that the provision of resources by member countries would depend on reform achieved through integration. Integration and efficiency were not the same thing, however, and the aim must be to enhance and consolidate the delivery of assistance.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that his agency was working very closely with the Secretary-General on the proposals for Track Two. While the decision on how to move forward rested, of course, with the Secretary-General himself, all the agencies had had a chance to put their proposals to him. A bold programme of reform would be needed and he welcomed in that connection the proposals put forward by the Nordic countries and the members of the European Union. He understood also that the Group of 77 had recently had a successful meeting with the Secretary-General.

Much interest had been expressed in the resident coordinator system and making it work better. Basically, there were two ways of doing so. If the position of resident coordinator became a full-time job, it would have to be linked to the operational system and given real authority and real resources. Alternatively, the "two hat" model could be retained. The conflict that might arise under the two-hat system had been exaggerated and could be dealt with. There was already, he thought, far more complementarity than conflict, but that was for the Secretary-General to decide.

There was cooperation with the regional economic commissions at the country level in UNDP programming and the commissions sometimes served as executing agencies. That cooperation should be strengthened and continued.

He agreed that greater transparency and better communication was required in respect of ACC. Its deliberations, of course, concerned Headquarters rather than country-level cooperation, but the results should be made available to Member States. There was also the Joint Consultative Group on Policy which worked to harmonize policy at the country level.

On the question of the selection of resident coordinators, he said that his agency had already developed a country profile, in consultation with the country concerned, describing the types of qualification needed. Governments could, of course, reject candidates and in some cases had done so. The process was in place and was working reasonably well.

On the question of participation, he agreed that the restructuring process must promote a more participatory approach. A powerful dialogue was needed with governments and with civil society and nothing proposed in the reforms would do anything but strengthen such a dialogue.

Ms. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund(UNFPA)) said that the penalty that she had referred to in connection with capacity-building was that, in some cases, a model of national execution had been agreed upon where the capacity did not exist, and the burden had then fallen entirely on the small UNFPA national office. Her agency was currently studying a system of guidance to the field in assessing capacity and of helping to build capacity where it did not exist.

In general, there had been a substantial increase in national education, but more needed to be done in terms of assistance - in training content, for example, and of auditing requirements - which she hoped would be taken up by the system as a whole.

She agreed that the Indian model was an excellent one. The Resident Coordinator there was to be congratulated on the way in which he had set himself apart from any one organization and taken an overall view of his role. He was, of course, an exceptional person but it should be possible to learn from his experience and see how a model could be developed.

She agreed that the resident coordinator system must be linked to operational activities and an institutional approach worked out that would not rely on personality. The contribution of staff members to the work of the team should form part of any performance evaluation. It was generally accepted that the resident coordinator system must be made to work, but there was not as yet any collegial agreement on how that should be done. The Secretary-General would make his decision in the near future. The results-oriented approach already adopted by her organization was a measure both of achievements and of persisting constraints.

Ms. BERTINI (Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP)) regretted that the impression might have been given that the agencies were arguing among themselves about Track One. They were all involved in implementing it and many positive results had been achieved. Progress had already been made on common premises and services, although some problems remained.

On the resident coordinator issue, she emphasized that all the agencies were committed to strengthening the system. There were differences of views: some agencies wanted to keep the "two-hat" system rather than have a separate and independent resident coordinator. The important point was that the person wearing the two hats should be able to distinguish between them. The distinction had been blurred in the past and one solution to the problem would be to make the position separate and independent.

With regard to staff, she pointed out that her agency had already converted a number of international posts to national ones and that, in its new regional offices, specific jobs had been designated for filling by national rather than international staff members.

On the question of the UNDAF, she said that it did actually add value to the process and that fairly rapid progress had been made, with all agencies participating. As for timing, UNDAF came after the CSN and the Country Programme Assessment but before the agencies worked out their own programmes.

As far as the measurement of achievement was concerned, WFP would need to focus more on the development side and the new evaluation system would seek to do precisely that. On the emergency side, the agency had already learned that it was necessary to decide ahead of time, through the contingency-planning process, how the success of a programme was to be defined and when it should be regarded as completed.

On the question as to whether resources were sufficient, she said that of course they were not. However, no matter how great its resources, WFP would never be able to solve the problem of world hunger alone and all must work together to make a difference.

Ms. BELLAMY (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that the resident coordinator system had already been a major topic in the agencies' group discussions and all of them attached high priority to it. It was fully recognized that both tracks of the reform

process must be put into effect and that the credibility not just of the United Nations itself but of the entire system was at stake. At the same time, care must be taken to ensure that at least those portions of the process relating to development and human rights were genuinely visionary and bold. Discussions regarding common premises and services were already proceeding rapidly, with criteria already adopted and a timetable set up.

On the question of qualified staff, she agreed that performance evaluation was crucial. Future reform would need to focus generally on improving the management of human resources. On the lessons learned through measuring outcomes, she said that UNICEF had already been successful in setting quantitative measurements. Like all the agencies, it faced a greater challenge in improving qualitative evaluation.

Some of the reforms had already had a measurable impact: for example, four agencies would shortly be presenting their budgets in a harmonized format. The UNICEF perspective whereby programming was based on rights rather than needs helped to build a certain sustainability into the process. That approach was just beginning to be followed in the field.

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General in charge of the Economic and Social Departments) said that the administrative savings that would result from the amalgamation of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Department for Social Information and Policy Analysis and the Department of Development Support and Management Services had not yet been worked out but would be seen when the revised estimates were presented. He stressed that the administrative savings to be redeployed for development would not simply be those resulting from the merger but all those that would arise from the reform and restructuring process. More specific proposals would be made at a future stage in that connection. He thanked his colleagues from the agencies for their replies to questions and, while not hiding their areas of disagreement, for highlighting in the large areas in which they were working together in harmony.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.